

The invention claimed is:

1. A shifter for controlling a vehicle transmission, comprising:
 - a base;
 - a shift lever movably mounted to the base for movement between a plurality of gear positions, at least one of the gear positions comprising a PARK/NEUTRAL position having a PARK and a NEUTRAL control feature;
 - an input device configured to switch between PARK and NEUTRAL upon actuation of the input device by an operator; and
 - an indicator on the shift lever indicates if the transmission is in PARK or NEUTRAL.
2. The shifter of claim 1, wherein:
 - the input device comprises a first input device; and including:
 - a pawl that restricts movement of the shift lever;
 - a second input device on the shift lever that controls the pawl.
3. The shifter of claim 2, wherein:
 - the shift lever is movable to a DRIVE position and a REVERSE position; and including:
 - a controller that prevents moving a transmission to the PARK position if the vehicle is moving at a speed that is above a predetermined velocity.
4. The shifter of claim 3, wherein:
 - the indicator provides a warning signal if the first input device is actuated while the vehicle is moving at a speed above the predetermined velocity.
5. The shifter of claim 3, wherein:
 - the controller does not shift the transmission out of PARK unless the vehicle brake pedal is depressed.

6. The shifter of claim 2, wherein:
the second input device comprises a movable member, wherein the indicator is on the movable member.
7. The shifter of claim 6, wherein:
the first and second input devices comprise buttons.
8. The shifter of claim 7, including:
an electrically powered pawl; and wherein:
the buttons are electrically coupled to the electrically powered pawl.
9. The shifter of claim 8, wherein:
the DRIVE, PARK/NEUTRAL, and REVERSE gear positions are in a generally straight line.
10. The shifter of claim 1, including:
an ignition device including a fob member generating a wireless security signal and a receiver that receives the security signal when the fob member is in the vicinity and enables the vehicle ignition if the security signal has a predefined configuration.
11. The shifter of claim 10, wherein:
the shifter includes a powered pawl that is controlled, at least in part, based upon if the receiver has received a security signal having the predefined configuration.
12. The shifter of claim 1, including:
a shift gate;
a powered pawl configured to engage the shift gate to selectively restrict movement of the shift lever, wherein the distance of travel of the pawl is based at least in part on a vehicle operating parameter.

13. The shifter of claim 12, wherein:
the vehicle operating parameter comprises vehicle speed.
14. The shifter of claim 13, wherein:
the shift gate includes a DRIVE position, a PARK/NEUTRAL position, and a REVERSE position, and wherein the shift gate includes a first raised portion between the DRIVE gear position and the PARK/NEUTRAL gear position, and a second raised portion between the PARK/NEUTRAL gear position and the REVERSE gear position, wherein the powered pawl shifts at least a first distance to clear the first raised portion, and shifts at least a second distance to clear the second raised portion, and wherein the shifter is configured to prevent the pawl from shifting to at least the second distance if the vehicle speed is above a predetermined level to thereby prevent shifting to REVERSE.
15. A shifter for vehicle transmissions, comprising:
a base;
a shift member movably mounted to the base for movement between DRIVE, PARK/NEUTRAL, and REVERSE gear positions;
a pawl selectively restricting movement of the shift member between the gear positions;
a first input device on the shift member that can be manipulated by an operator to control actuation of the pawl; and
a second input device on the shift member to control shifting between PARK and NEUTRAL when the shift member is in the PARK/NEUTRAL gear position.
16. The shifter of claim 15, including:
an indicator on the shift member providing a signal showing what gear the transmission is in.
17. The shifter of claim 16, wherein:
the shift member comprises a shift lever.

18. The shifter of claim 17, wherein:
the indicator is on the second input device.
19. The shifter of claim 18, wherein:
the first input device is mechanically linked to the pawl for actuation of the pawl.
20. The shifter of claim 18, wherein:
the pawl is electrically powered, and the first and second input devices comprise buttons electrically coupled to the pawl.
21. A shifter for controlling the transmission of a vehicle, comprising:
a floor console having a base;
a shift lever movably mounted to the base, the shift lever movable between DRIVE, PARK/NEUTRAL, and REVERSE gear positions; and wherein:
the shift lever has a knob with an indicator on the knob providing an indication of the gear position of the transmission.
22. The shifter of claim 21, including:
an input device on the knob that shifts between the PARK and NEUTRAL positions when the shift lever is in the PARK/NEUTRAL gear position.
23. The shifter of claim 22, wherein:
the input device comprises a first input device; and including:
a pawl configured to control movement of the shift lever;
a second input device on the knob that is operably coupled to the pawl for controlling the pawl.
24. The shifter of claim 23, wherein:
the pawl is electrically powered, and the first and second input devices comprise buttons.

25. A shifter for controlling a transmission, comprising:
a base;
a shift member movably mounted to the base, the shift member being movable to a plurality of gear positions for control of a transmission; and
an indicator on the shift member having a visual display indicating what gear the transmission is in.
26. The shifter of claim 25, wherein:
the shift member comprises a lever movable along a shift lane having a plurality of gear positions.
27. The shifter of claim 26, wherein:
at least one of the gear positions comprises a PARK/NEUTRAL position; and
including:
an input device configured to switch between PARK and NEUTRAL upon actuation of the input device by an operator.
28. The shifter of claim 27, wherein:
the input device comprises a first input device; and including:
a pawl that restricts movement of the shift lever;
a second input device on the shift lever that controls the pawl.
29. The shifter of claim 28, wherein:
the second input device comprises a movable member, wherein the indicator is on the movable member.
30. The shifter of claim 29, wherein:
the first and second input devices comprise buttons.

31. The shifter of claim 30, including:
an electrically powered pawl; and wherein:
the buttons are electrically coupled to the electrically powered pawl.
32. The shifter of claim 26, wherein:
the shift lane includes PARK, REVERSE, NEUTRAL, and DRIVE gear positions.
33. The shifter of claim 32, wherein:
the indicator comprises a lighted display.